**Opening of Nathu-la for border trade**

882. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) by when Nathu-la route is likely to be opened for border trade between India and China; and

(b) the extent to which Indian States are likely to drive benefit from the proposed border trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) It has been proposed to open border trade through Nathu-la in June, 2006. However, in view of climatic conditions in the region, operationalisation of broder trade through Nathula Pass may be delayed. The modalities for border trade through Nathula Pass are being worked out in consultation with the Chinese side.

(b) Border trade is overland trade and exchange of commodities by the residents along the border and trade and exchange of mutually agreed commodities in the border areas of the two countries. As such, only border residents will derive benefit from the proposed border trade.

**Imports/export during current year**

883. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the imports is expected to be more than the export during the current financial year;

(b) if so, what is its estimate with regard to the value of import and export; and

(c) what is the value of import of gold and the amount received through export of jewellery, etc, during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) According to the latest provisional figures available from the Directorage General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata India's imports were estimated

at US$ 108.80 billion, as against exports estimated at US $74.97 billion during April-January, 2005-06

(c) The value of import of gold to India was US$ 10.3 billion during 2004-05 as compared with US$6.5 billion in 2003-04. The value of exports of gems and jewellery was 13.7 billion in 2004-05 as compared with US$10.6 billion during 2003-04.

**Recommendations made by NMCC**

884. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) has recently made certain recommendations about how to achieve 12 per cent growth in the manufacturing sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have examined the recommendations and chalked out any action plan in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) The National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council has finalised its report on devising a strategy for manufacturing. The recommendations *inter-alia* aim at stepping up the rate of growth of manufacturing to 12% per annum. The report has not yet been adopted by the Government.

**FTAs with neighbours**

885. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to launch a major exercise to hasten Free Trade Agreements with its neighbours;

(b) if so, the details of the talks held with each country;

(c) the outcome thereof;